



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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INTERIOR DEPARTMENT CREATES TWO NEW WILDLIFE REFUGES

Two new wildlife refuges totaling 12,034 acres have been established in California and Texas, Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton announced today. He said the same order also set aside 19,688 acres in Montana for wildlife purposes.

The wildlife areas were included in an order providing for the administration by the Department of the Interior of more than 2,186,000 acres transferred from the Department of Agriculture in November, 1958.

The new Buffalo Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Randall County, Texas, covers 7,677 acres. In Tulare County, California, the new Pixley National Wildlife Refuge has 4,357 acres. The refuges will be administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department.

In Montana, the service received 12,450 acres in Musselshell County for an addition to the Lake Mason National Wildlife Refuge; 320 more acres in Phillips County for the Hewitt Lake National Wildlife Refuge; a 3,718-acre addition in Fergus, Phillips and Valley Counties for the Fort Peck Game Range, and jurisdiction over 3,200 acres in the War Horse Lake, Wild Horse Lake and Yellow Water Reservoir areas in Petroleum County. Although not contiguous, the latter three units will constitute a new haven of considerable value for waterfowl conservation.

All of the lands included in the transfer were among those retired from agricultural use nearly three decades ago under the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act. The lands were of submarginal agricultural value and were taken over by the Department of Agriculture for specified public purposes such as forestry, grazing, or recreation.

Since the transfer of the lands to the Department of the Interior a year ago, the Fish and Wildlife Service has taken preliminary steps necessary to manage the Pixley and Buffalo Lakes areas for wildlife purposes. The Secretary's action formalizes these operations.

The balance of the more than two million acres transferred from the Department of Agriculture is under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management. The largest of these areas is the Milk River Land Project in Blaine, Phillips, and

Valley Counties in Montana, approximately 948,627 acres. Other large areas in Montana include Lower Yellowstone Project, Prairie County, 391,933 acres; Musselshell Project in Musselshell and Petroleum counties, 252,589 acres; Southeast Montana Project in Custer and Fallon counties, 129,765 acres; and Central Montana Project in Fergus county, 101,590 acres.

In New Mexico the Bureau of Land Management was given jurisdiction over the Cuba-Rio Puerco project in Sandoval and McKinley Counties, a tract of 193,350 acres, and over two other tracts totalling about 51,000 acres.

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